



# Department of Justice

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Northern District of New York

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY RICHARD S. HARTUNIAN announced that RAFAEL RICARDO ESPINAL, age 39, of North Bergen, New Jersey, was sentenced today to imprisonment for a period of 19 months, followed by supervised release for 3 years, a fine of \$10,000 and an assessment of \$100.00, by Senior United States District Judge Lawrence E. Kahn, in Albany, New York, for passport fraud. Today's sentencing followed ESPINAL's January 14, 2010 guilty plea.

ESPINAL, a citizen of the Dominican Republic, claimed to be a United States citizen born in Puerto Rico and presented a United States passport at the Champlain, New York Port of Entry on June 24, 2006. The passport Espinal used had been altered. The photograph of Espinal was substituted for the photograph of the true owner of the passport. The alteration of the passport was not immediately detected and Espinal was allowed to proceed into the United States. Agents of the United States Department of State later determined that the passport had been altered, confronted Espinal, and recovered the passport in November 2007. Espinal avoided apprehension by law enforcement until he was arrested in North Bergen, New Jersey on November 24, 2009.

This matter was investigated by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Fort Lee, New Jersey, and United States Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Rouses Point, New York.

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